

### Museum Small Craft Association Meeting

October 5–7, 1990

The annual meeting of the Museum Small Craft Association will take place in Nova Scotia this year. The conference theme will be "Rowing Craft: For Work and Pleasure." Co-hosting museums are the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic in Halifax and the Fisheries Museum of the Atlantic in Lunenburg. For additional

information contact MSCA Programme Committee, c/o Garth Wilson, Curator of Marine Transportation, National Museum of Science and Technology, P.O. Box 9724, Ottawa Terminal, Ottawa K1G 5A3 (613 991-3087).

### New Acquisition at the New Brunswick Museum

ROBERT S. ELLIOT

Earlier this year, the New Brunswick Museum was fortunate to acquire another fine ship portrait to add to its large collection of nineteenth and early twentieth century examples. The purchase of the oil painting of the schooner *Mola* was made possible through generous financial assistance from the Minister of Communications under the terms of the Cultural Property Export and Import Act,

and the Viscount R. B. Bennett Trust Fund. This acquisition represents a significant addition to the Museum's growing collection of marine portraits.

The portrait depicts the New Brunswick-built, three-masted schooner *Mola*, which was constructed at Gardner's Creek by Archibald Sinclair and first registered at the port of Saint John in 1892. John Marshall Smith (and others) of Windsor, Nova Scotia owned the 350-ton vessel until it was sold to Mark Shaw of New York on 25 June 1901. Shaw was empowered to sell the *Mola* outside Canada and by 18 December 1902 the vessel had indeed changed hands again. The 1907–08 *Lloyd's Register* listed the schooner's name as the *Minerva* with the port of registry being Vera Cruz, Mexico. Since the *Mola* went aground at Chadwick, New Jersey, on 20 April 1901, the suggestion arises that this particular incident led directly to the decision to offer the schooner for sale.

The portrait of the *Mola* depicts the ship aground at Chadwick. It was painted by Antonio Nicolo Gasparo Jacobsen (1850–1921) of West Hoboken, New Jersey. The work is important because it depicts a rather typical New Brunswick-built schooner of the late

**Fig. 1**  
Antonio Jacobsen's  
*Mola*. (Courtesy New  
Brunswick Museum)



nineteenth century. However, despite the fact that schooners were very common in the Maritime provinces throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, relatively few appear in ship portraits of the period. The question of why that was the case is open to speculation. The painting, furthermore, is a superior example of the work of Antonio Jacobsen and a more unusual depiction of a specific sailing vessel. Normally the vessel would have been shown side-on rather than in a stern-quarter view as is the case with this portrait.

The existence of a dated photograph (20 April 1901) of the grounded *Mola* at the Mariner's Museum at Newport News, Virginia, provides strong proof that Jacobsen painted his portrait from the surviving photograph, or a very similar photograph, since the photograph and the painting are almost identical, with one interesting exception. The painting includes a Merritt and Chapman tug in the background while the photograph does not. This seems to indicate that either the owner of the tug company, or perhaps the tugboat's master, commissioned the portrait.

## **Veronika Gervers Research Fellowship**

The Royal Ontario Museum announces the annual Veronika Gervers Research Fellowship in Textile and Costume History. This award, valued up to \$9000, is to be made to a scholar working on any aspect of textile or costume history whose research makes direct use of, or supports, any part of the ROM collections that

cover a broad range of time and geography. For information, contact Chair, Veronika Gervers Memorial Fellowship, Textile Department, Royal Ontario Museum, 100 Queen's Park, Toronto, Ontario, M5S 2C6 (416 586-5790). Deadline for applications: 15 November 1990.